



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/649,080	08/27/2003	Michael E. McDole	03-5344A	4655
7590	05/27/2005		EXAMINER	
Edward M. Livingston, P.A. 963 Trail Terrace Drive Naples, FL 34103			SUHOL, DMITRY	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3725	

DATE MAILED: 05/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/649,080	MCDOLE, MICHAEL E.	
	Examiner Dmitry Suhol	Art Unit 3725	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 March 2005.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

The drawings are objected to because the drawings use terminology that is offensive. Moreover, since 37 CFR 1.3 proscribes the presentation of papers which are lacking in decorum and courtesy, and this includes depictions of caricatures in the disclosure, drawings, and/or claim which might reasonably be considered offensive, such subject matter as presented herein is deemed to be clearly contrary to 37 CFR 1.3. See MPEP § 608.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. In analyzing claims 1-5 for patent eligible subject matter, it is useful to first answer the question "What did applicant[s] invent?" In re Abele, 214 USPQ 682 (CCPA 1982). The preamble of the claims characterizes the invention as a "method for censoring...". Thus the invention is essentially a method of a selective display of visual material.

Having determined in general what the invention is, we must analyze it under the prevailing case law. The statute itself allows for the patenting of processes. However, it has been determined in many contexts that not all processes set forth patent eligible

subject matter. One test that has recently been applied is whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, tangible result. See e.g., States Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group Inc., 47 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1998); AT&T Corp. v. Excel Communications Inc., 50 USPQ2d 1447 (Fed. Cir. 1999). Under that test, the invention must have practical utility, it must produce an assured result, and it must not be merely an abstraction lacking in physical substance.

In this case, the claimed invention does not produce a "tangible" result in the sense that it merely manipulates abstract ideas without producing a physical transformation or conversion of the subject matter expressed in the claim so as to produce a change of character or condition in some physical object. See In re Warmerdam, 31 USPQ2d 1754 (Fed. Cir. 1994); In re Schrader, 30 USPQ2d 1445 (Fed. Cir. 1994). The claims are abstract ideas lacking any physical substance, in other words the method steps to not claim any tangible medium but rather appear to be mere thoughts/ideas which do not produce a change of character or condition in some physical object. The method does not produce a physical transformation and yields no tangible result. It is thus effectively a manipulation of abstract ideas and is thus not statutory.

Even if it might be determined that the claimed method can be characterized as producing a useful, concrete, tangible result, to be proper subject matter for patent eligibility, any useful, concrete, tangible result must be within the useful or technological arts. See e.g., In re Musgrave, 167 USPQ 280 (CCPA 1970); In re Foster, 169 USPQ 99 (CCPA 1971). The Constitution empowers Congress to promote the useful arts.

The term "useful arts" has been equated with "technological arts" in a number of decisions. See e.g., In re Waldbaum, 173 USPQ 430 (CCPA 1972).

In this case, the claimed invention is not within the useful or technological arts. Rather, the invention is within the realm of the liberal arts or social sciences. In Musgrave and Foster, the inventions were deemed to be within the technological arts. In those cases, each invention clearly involved computer or machine technology. But here, there is no technology involved at all. There is no technology disclosed or claimed. The symbol and material to be banned are peripheral elements to the actual process and cannot reasonably convert an otherwise non-statutory process outside the technological arts into one that is in fact within the technological arts.

Claims 1-5 do not produce a tangible result in the technological arts. The invention as disclosed and claimed does not promote the progress of the useful arts. Accordingly claims 1-5 do not define statutory subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kasha '036. Kasha discloses a method containing all of the elements of the claims including with reference to claim 1, identifying material to be banned and using an unoffensive

symbol in place of the material to be banned (col. 10, lines 48-49). Banned material being textual matter, as required by claim 2, is shown in figure 11 as character 76. Material to be banned being images, as required by claim 3, is figure 11, as image of character 76. Material to be banned being transmitted over a visual arts medium, as required by claim 4, is shown in figure 11 where the visual arts medium is sheet 75. An unoffensive symbol being a box wherein the box is sized as to replace the entire area of the material to be banned, as required by claim 5, is shown in figure 11 where it is clear that the box shaped flap covers the entire banned area encompassed by character 76.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cragun et al '212. Cragun discloses a method for censoring containing most of the elements of the claims including with reference to claim 1, identifying material to be banned (col. 2, lines 26-41) and using an unoffensive symbol in place of the material to be banned (col. 2, lines 38-41). Banned material being textual matter, as required by claim 2, is described in col. 2, lines 35-38. Material to be banned being images, as required by claim 3, is described in col. 2, lines 15-26 where it is clear that text material are images on a display of internet material. Material to be banned being transmitted

over a visual arts medium, as required by claim 4, is described in col. 2, lines 15-26 where the visual arts medium is the internet.

Cragun fails to explicitly teach an unoffensive symbol being a box as required by claim 1. However, the examiner takes official notice that the use of "black out boxes" sized to replace an entire area to be blocked out is notoriously well known in a variety of contexts such as for example, images of sexually explicit material in video type format or printed matter and declassified government documents among others. Therefore it would have been obvious to utilize a box sized to replace the entire area of material to be banned with the method of Cragun, especially since Cragun clearly states that any type of used predefined characters may be used to replace the censored text of his invention (col. 2, line 41).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed March 5th, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicants argue that the language used in the application (although offensive) is necessary to enable any person skilled in the art to make and use the invention. The examiner disagrees and points out that the phrase "offensive language" would be understood just as well but without being offensive.

Applicants further argue that their invention does produce a tangible result in that it produces a physical transformation upon pre-existing material so as to change the character or condition of pre-existing material. In response it is pointed out that applicants in no way claim any tangible medium or pre-existing material of any sort (i.e.

printed matter or computer readable medium), therefore the entire process can be effectively carried out in a person imagination rather than on a tangible medium as required.

Applicants further argue that Kasha does not anticipate the claims since the adhesive flaps of Kasha do not actually replace the material to be banned since a user "would still be able to view the material to be banned simply by lifting the flap". In response the examiner points out that applicants claim language calls for "...using a box in place of said material to be banned" in which case placing a box adhesive of Kasha over text reads on applicants claim language since the box adhesive replaces that text material when viewed normally.

Applicants further argue that it would not be obvious to utilize a "black box" to replace the entire area of material to be banned with the method of Cragun et al since a character is defined as a symbol that represents information and since Cragun characters may be either symbols (i.e. *) or alphanumeric characters (i.e. a, b, 1 or 2) and since a box is not a character as it must be drawn and is not found on a computer keyboard or typewriter. In response the examiner points that a black box is a symbol, in fact the "Microsoft Word" software (which is currently being used to write this office action) is able to produce a "black box" symbol by accessing the "insert" drop down button and opening up the "symbols" tab found therein which has "black box" symbols among a wide variety of other symbols (for example, [REDACTED], which is produced by five "black box" symbols next to one another).

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dmitry Suhol whose telephone number is 571-272-4430. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Derris Banks can be reached on (571)272-4419. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3715

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

ds



DERRIS H. BANKS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700